

Annual Report 2018 - 2019



**Lismore City Council
acknowledges the
Widjabal/Wyabal people
of the Bundjalung
nation, traditional owners
of the land on which we
work. We acknowledge
their continuing
connection to the land, sea
and community. We pay
our respects to them and
their culture, their Elders
and community leaders
both past and present.**



Contents

Mayor's Message	4
General Manager's Message	5
Who We Are	6
Delivery Program Report*	12
Community Finance Report	48
Statutory Index	54

*Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are warned this publication contains an image of a deceased person.

Mayor's Message

It is my pleasure to introduce Lismore City Council's Annual Report for 2018-19.

This time last year we were still recovering from the devastating flood. While more work needs to be done, we are now well on the road to recovery. As a community, we have showed that by working together we can get things done.

Council is now looking towards the future and the provision of the services and the economic development our community needs and deserves.

It has been a year of reducing Council's expenses, including deferring 33 projects from the Imagine Lismore Delivery Program in recognition of financial challenges faced. It's also been a year of increasing investments across our local government area designed to reinforce Lismore as the regional capital of the Northern Rivers and create local jobs.

We have continued to increase investments in our roads, sports fields, and recreational areas.

The upgrades of Albert Park, Oakes and Crozier Regional Sports Hub and the Far North Coast Regional Hockey Centre have attracted national and state championships, and even AFL matches, that bring many tens of thousands of people to Lismore from around the country and confirm our reputation as the regional sporting capital.

We have also grown the heart of Lismore by supporting our local small businesses through rebuilding communication and engagement, while



continuing to promote award winning events like Eat the Street and the Lantern Parade.

Yet, the heart is nothing without a soul. That's why we nurtured our creative spirit by supporting regionally and nationally important organisations such as the Lismore Regional Gallery, which exhibited the prestigious Archibald Prize for the first time earlier this year.

We have done all of this, while ensuring the sustainability of our natural environment.

Together, Council and the community has achieved a lot this year. By continuing to work together, we will make sure the best is yet to come.

General Manager's Message

Last financial year is best described as one of very tough decisions and great achievements.

Councillors and council staff have done a huge amount of work over the year to reduce our budget deficit and develop a plan for a sustainable future.

This included addressing a \$6.1 million deficit and taking the very hard decision to revise the Imagine Lismore Delivery Program. Councillors and staff put in many hours to achieve this, including numerous late nights and weekends. This means we can now focus on our core commitments into the future; in particular, addressing our road maintenance backlog.

While this has been a very tough process, the Lismore community and the Council have a lot to celebrate this year.

Our iconic Eat the Street Festival has again won plaudits around the country, taking out Silver at the 2018 NSW Tourism Awards and a Highly Commended at the 2019 Local Government Professionals Excellence Awards.

The Lismore Regional Gallery also continued to attract recognition, winning a Museums & Galleries of NSW IMAGinE Award and a 2018 NSW Country Division Architecture Award for its local architect, Dominic Finlay Jones Architects. Across the Quad, Lismore Library won a NSW Public Library Association Award.



Last year, I wrote that Council proudly switched on the Lismore Community Solar Initiative, Australia's largest floating solar farm. This year, I am happy to report it won two major awards for its innovative approach to community partnership and engagement.

The South Lismore Sewage Treatment Plant was the fourth Council project to be recognised by our peers, winning a Local Government Excellence Award. This project is a key step toward expanding Lismore's capacity as a regional city.

I express my gratitude to Councillors and the hard-working staff for their passion and dedication over the past year in meeting challenges and making valuable contributions to the City of Lismore.

Who we are

Lismore is known as the heart of the Northern Rivers.



As a thriving regional city and services hub, Lismore supports a large urban population and provides vital services for many outlying villages, hamlets and rural areas.

Lismore's population of around 45,000 encompasses a diverse range of colourful people from all walks of life: business people, artists, musicians, farmers and orchardists, students and academics, nurses and medicos, proud Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, tree-changers, tradies, entrepreneurs, and a vibrant LGBTQI community. Lismore is a city where difference is embraced and community is strong. The region is more broadly known as the Rainbow Region in honour of this diversity.

The makeup of our community continues to change over time. In the last five years, the average age of residents has risen, families are having fewer children and there are more people living alone. The number of migrants is also rising, as more people choose to call Lismore home.

As Lismore continues to strengthen its status as a regional city, with expansion of health and education sectors and the growth of cottage industries, Lismore's workforce has grown, with more people securing employment and tertiary qualifications, and average weekly incomes rising.

All of this combines to create a unique Local Government Area that is diverse, vibrant and flourishing.

At a glance...

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics 2016, 2018



Compared to NSW, Lismore has a higher proportion of:

Older workers, pre-retirees and empty nesters

People employed in health care and the social assistance sector

People that own their own home

People that need assistance in their day-to-day lives due to disability

43,843

Total population

64%

Urban population

36%

Rural population

43

Average age

19,097

Total households

2.38

Average household size

4,043

Total businesses

\$1,062

Average weekly income

76.2%

People who travel to work by car

4.8%

Unemployment

27.1%

Single person households

5.0%

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

82%

Born in Australia

73.7%

Homes connected to the internet

Your Councillors

Lismore City Council is made up of 11 Councillors who were elected for a four-year term in September 2016.

Our Mayor

Mayor Isaac Smith

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Role of Councillors

- Provide strong and effective leadership, planning and decision-making
- Represent the collective interests of residents, ratepayers, and the local community
- Plan strategically, allocate resources, and provide services and regulation that meet the diverse needs of the local community
- Facilitate communication between the community and the Council

Councillor Entitlements

Councillors are eligible for a range of entitlements and allowances associated with their role, including reimbursement of expenses incurred in carrying out their civic duties and provision of facilities to assist in fulfilling their obligations. These are provided in accordance with Council's Councillor Expenses and Facilities Policy, which ensures entitlements are transparent, accountable, and meet the expectations of the community. A copy of the Policy can be downloaded from Council's website at www.lismore.nsw.gov.au.

In 2018-19, a total of \$260,031 was provided in allowances, including:

- \$43,165 for a Mayoral allowance
- \$216,866 in total for Councillor allowances

Councillors were also eligible for the following allowances, expenses and facilities:

Councillor Expenses & Facilities	\$
Office equipment and facilities	8,021
Telephone calls	2,973
Conferences and seminar attendance	9,422
Training	5,150
Interstate visits (including transport, accommodation and other out-of-pocket travelling expenses)	8,015
Overseas visits (including transport, accommodation and other out-of-pocket travelling expenses)	0
Expenses for spouses (who accompanied a Councillor)	120
Child care	770
Total	34,471

Council Meetings

In December 2018, the Office of Local Government released a new Model Code of Meeting Practice for NSW councils. This prompted the development and public exhibition of an updated Code of Meeting Practice for Council to replace the previous April 2018 version. During this process, Councillors and selected Council staff also received training from the Office of Local Government on key changes and updates. The new Code of Meeting Practice was adopted in June 2019.

The Code of Meeting Practice is an important tool for ensuring council business and decision making is conducted in a consistent and transparent manner.

19 Council meetings held
225 resolutions made



DID YOU KNOW?

Members of the community can address Councillors on any topic during Public Forum sessions at the start of every Council Meeting. The new Code of Meeting Practice allows a maximum speaking time of 4 minutes. To find out more, visit our website at www.lismore.nsw.gov.au.

Council Travel and Training

Councillors did not undertake any overseas travel during 2018-19. However, Councillors did attend various conferences and awards ceremonies within NSW and interstate during the year, at a total cost of \$22,587.

In 2018-19, Councillors also received training from the Office of Local Government on financial issues in local government, as well as provisions of the new Model Code of Meeting Practice and Model Code of Conduct released in December 2018.

Your Council

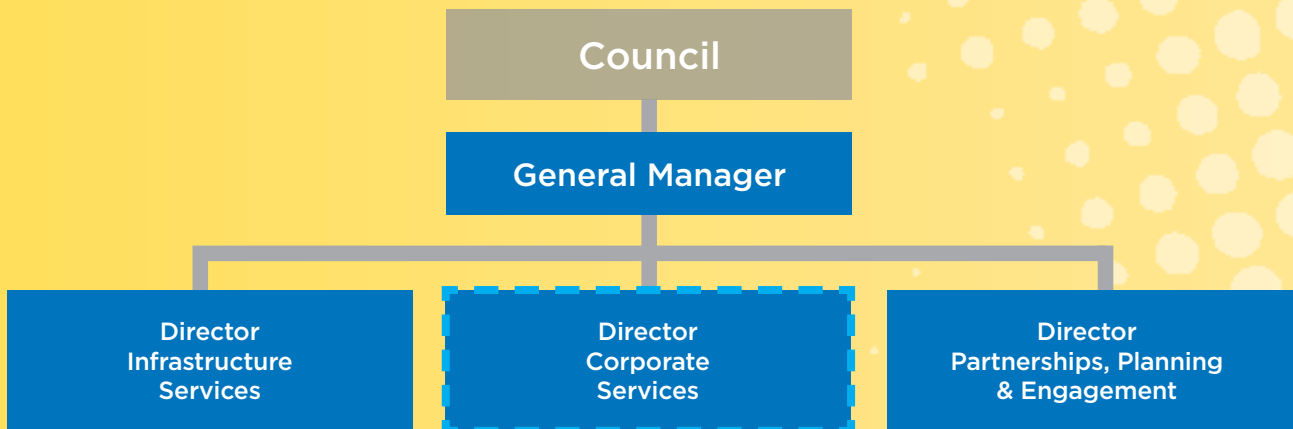
Organisational Structure

Every four years, Council adopts a staff structure to support the Council and General Manager to deliver the programs and activities in the Imagine Lismore Delivery Program and Operational Plan.

A structure reconfiguration commenced in March 2019, commencing with the top level of the structure. This included the creation of a new trial Director of Corporate Services role for a contracted period of 12 months.

The reconfiguration, including the alignment of lower levels of the structure, will continue in to 2019-20, in consultation with Unions.

At the end of the financial year, Council had approved the following levels of the structure:



368.7

Council FTE employees

8.4

Full-time equivalent staff per 1,000 residents

60.3

Shared services (RTRL) FTE employees

18%

Employee turnover rate



General Manager

In October 2018, Council appointed its first female General Manager (GM), Shelley Oldham. Shelley brought to the role extensive public and private sector experience in strategy development, government transformation, and stakeholder management.

Whilst Shelley did not undertake any international travel in the financial year, she travelled to several interstate conferences and meetings to strengthen Council's relationship with the NSW and Australian Governments.

The total remuneration package for the General Manager position for 2018-19 was \$306,757. Further information about remuneration can be found in Appendix 1 – Statutory Information.

Council also thanks Scott Turner, who was Acting GM between June – October 2018. Scott returned to his substantive role as Manager, Assets.



Meet the executive team

Council underwent significant leadership change within its staff during 2018-19. In April 2019, Council resolved to reconfigure its organisational structure. This included a trial directorate for Corporate Services, with Graeme Towers appointed on a 12-month contract as its Interim Director. The Sustainable Development directorate also underwent a name change and is now known as Partnerships, Planning & Engagement. In August 2018, Peter Jeuken was appointed as its Acting Director, when former Director, Brent McAlister, left Council.

The total remuneration package for Directors in 2018-19 was \$560,833. This included salary, superannuation, non-cash benefits and fringe tax benefits for non-cash benefits. Council did not pay any bonuses or performance payments in 2018-19.

Further information about remuneration can be found in Appendix 1 – Statutory Information.

Infrastructure Services

Gary J. Murphy, Director



Partnerships, Planning & Engagement

Peter Jeuken, Acting Director



Corporate Services

Graeme Towers, Interim Director



Delivery Program Progress Report



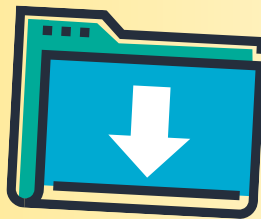
Our Progress

Lismore City Council provides a broad range of services to meet the day-to-day needs of the community. Every program, project, activity, and service Council delivers to the community is planned for and documented in the Imagine Lismore Delivery Program. The Delivery Program seeks to achieve a range of strategic objectives identified by the community in the Imagine Lismore Community Strategic Plan 2017-2027. A revised Delivery Program was adopted

by Council in June 2019, to reflect the March 2019 resolution to defer or cancel 33 projects due to financial challenges. This section of the Annual Report focuses on Council's progress during 2018-19 in implementing the second year of the original Imagine Lismore Delivery Program 2017-2021. It details progress, achievements, and statutory information prescribed by the Local Government Regulation 2005 for each of the five key themes.

DID YOU KNOW?

You can download copies of the Community Strategic Plan and Delivery Program from our website at www.lismore.nsw.gov.au.



A An inclusive and healthy community



10-year objectives

A1 Our community is safe, happy and healthy.

A2 We recognise our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community and cultures.

A3 Our sporting facilities and recreational spaces encourage active and passive community participation.

A4 Our community is a desirable place to live, an easy place to work and a welcoming place to visit.

A5 Our community has access to essential services.

\$19.9 million spent in 2018-19

Key Highlights

Council secured \$683,000 in grant funding through the Australian Government Safer Communities Fund and the NSW Government Community Safety Fund to upgrade the Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV) network in Lismore and Nimbin and works are underway.

The new Lismore Disaster Dashboard was launched to provide residents with a central information portal in cases of emergency.

Grant funding was received to develop disaster readiness resources for businesses and residents.

Lismore City Council ranger Skyhe Hoyt was nominated for the 2019 Lismore Business Awards Outstanding Young Employee of the Year.

AUSLAN-led tours of The Archibald Prize at Lismore Regional Gallery took place in May and June 2019 (thanks to support from local Quota Clubs) for members of the deaf community.

ReadSpeaker technology was installed on Council's website, which provides text to speech services for people who are vision impaired.

Council secured \$5.95 million in additional funding support from the NSW Government to progress the Albert Park redevelopment.

Council raised an additional \$12 million in funding, including NSW Government grants, and Council's own contribution, to progress the ongoing redevelopment of Oakes Oval and Crozier Field.

Goonellabah Sport and Aquatic Centre celebrated its 10th birthday.

Public Health and Safety

Council has a responsibility to look after the health and safety of our community. Some of the ways we do these are through public health and amenity inspections, environmental compliance, companion animal management, and by responding to public health and safety incidents. Each year, we undertake thousands of inspections and respond to community requests and complaints.

108 private swimming pool fence inspections

293 public amenity inspections

600 on-site sewage management (septic system) inspections

445 food safety inspections



64 dog attack incidents investigated

122 fines for breaches of companion animal laws

Lismore Disaster Ready

In the wake of the devastating Cyclone Debbie flood in March 2017, Council launched a Disaster Ready project to develop a comprehensive, community-wide action plan for natural disasters.

After nearly a year of consultation and collaboration with emergency services, local agencies and community groups, the project has delivered the Lismore Recovery and Resilience Action Plan, which links closely to the Northern Rivers Emergency Management Plan and its associated Northern Rivers Recovery Plan. The Action Plan provides a clear framework on how to be prepared and resilient before, during and after a natural disaster.

Council also received funding through the State and Federal funded Community Resilience Innovation Program to develop a range of resources to help raise community awareness regarding floods and other disasters.

This included the launch of the new Lismore Disaster Dashboard at www.disaster.lismore.nsw.gov.au, which provides important information and resources via one easy portal, and the distribution of free fridge magnets to residents in flood-affected areas and flood markers around Lismore City.

A Safe City

In 2018, Council secured a \$433,000 grant through the Australian Government's Safer Communities Fund and an additional \$250,000 grant through the NSW Government's Community Safety Fund to upgrade the Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV) network in Lismore and Nimbin. The funds will be used to replace the existing analogue CCTV systems in Lismore CBD and Nimbin with modern, high definition cameras. Works are due to be completed by Christmas.

In 2019-20, Council also convened a Social Justice & Crime Prevention Committee, comprising a coalition of Lismore's justice sector stakeholders, to identify regional needs relating to drug and crime rehabilitation.

One of the Committee's key recommendations to Council in April 2019 included working with the community to investigate options for justice reinvestment. Justice reinvestment aims to divert funds from prisons and in to communities to break the cycle of incarceration and make communities safer.

Other measures implemented during the financial year to keep our City and towns safe included the installation of an additional CCTV camera at the Nimbin Community Centre and the ongoing provision of the Lismore Late Nighter bus service.

Companion Animals in Your LGA

Council spent a total of \$404,295 on companion animal management activities in 2018-19. This covered enforcement, education and information activities such as:

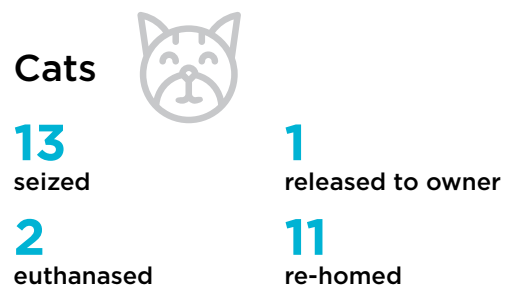
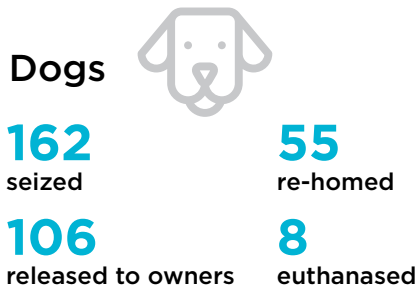
- Community education programs and community liaison to promote and assist in responsible pet ownership, microchipping and de-sexing of dogs and cats (for example, through the National Desexing Network and community events such as the North Coast National Lismore Show), which contributed to fewer companion animal seizures last year
- Maintenance of 4 off-leash areas, at Riverside Park South (fenced area), Lismore Gasworks, Elizabeth Gardens, and Hepburn Park Recreational Area
- Provision of appropriate management and care of animals that come into Council's custody at the pound
- Investigation of 64 reported dog attack incidents (includes when a dog threatens, harasses, chases, or bites a person or another animal)

Alternatives to Euthanasia

Council has an obligation under the Companion Animal Act 2008 to consider alternative courses of action before euthanasing any animals that come into its care. Council chooses not to euthanase healthy animals that arrive at the pound, instead allowing animals to stay at the facility until a forever home can be arranged.

Where possible, animals are released back to owners or released for rehoming to animal rescue organisations such as Animal Rights and Rescue, Animal Welfare League NSW & QLD, Companion Animals Welfare Inc, 11 Hour Rescue, Australian Working Dogs Rescue, and Wally's Rescue. Council also puts animals up for adoption directly through the pound.

Sadly, sometimes animals may not be suitable for re-homing, due to poor health or temperament, and in these cases, animals are euthanased.



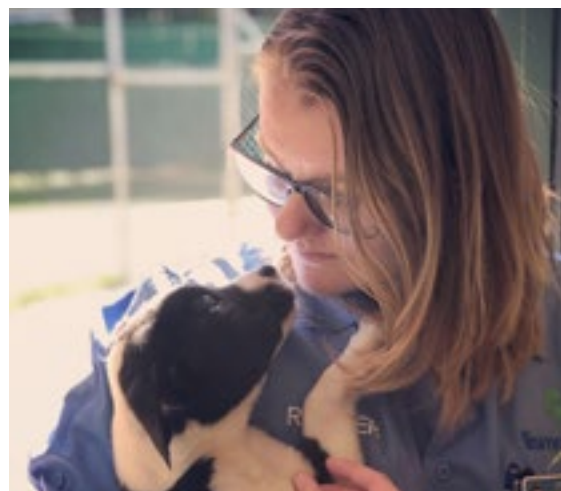
Staff Spotlight

Council ranger Skyhe Hoyt was nominated for the 2019 Lismore Business Awards Outstanding Young Employee of the Year.

She is an exceptional ambassador for Lismore City Council and loves inspiring young women who want to embark on a career in traditionally male roles.

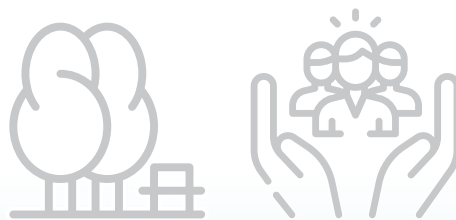
Skyhe joined Council in 2016 as a Trainee Law Enforcement Officer and completed a Certificate IV in Regulatory Services. She undertakes a variety of roles from parking enforcement to dealing with abandoned vehicles and dog attacks but said it's her work at the Lismore Pound that is most rewarding.

"Within the first week of starting my traineeship, I knew it was the right career path for me".



A Diverse Community

Council is working towards a community that is accessible and inclusive of everyone, and one that provides equal opportunity for people with disability to utilise and enjoy the public spaces and life in our city, towns and villages.



A Diverse Council Workforce

Council recognises that its workforce is ageing and that we need to attract younger staff. One of the ways we are doing this is by removing barriers to participation or progression and encouraging workforce diversity to build the talent pool we need for the future.

To help us achieve this, Council's Equal Employment Opportunity Plan details our commitment to deliver equal employment opportunity through the Reconciliation Action Plan, Disability Inclusion Action Plan and other measures, to ensure a workforce that is representative of the demographic of our community.

Key achievements in 2018-19 in implementing the EEO Plan include:

- Flexible working trials to attract and retain employees
- Appointment of Council's first female General

28% of supervisory employees were female

28% of staff aged 55 years and over

31 staff identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander

9 staff identified as living with a disability

Manager

- Provision of work placement and employment opportunities for four local people living with a disability, in partnership with local disability employment service providers
- Engagement of Aruma (formally House with No Steps) to provide employment opportunities for meaningful work and social interactions for several people at Council's Materials Recovery Facility
- Ongoing employment of seven local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander trainees within Council
- The transition of one of the six school-based Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Council trainees (participating in the Elsa Dixon Aboriginal Employment Program) to casual employment at the Richmond Tweed Regional Library.

Reconciliation at Council

In 2018-19, Council commenced a review of its Reconciliation Action Plan, which is updated every few years. The review is expected to be completed by the end of 2019.

Throughout the financial year, Council's RAP working group met regularly to track and monitor the delivery of remaining actions in the existing RAP and represent the interests of Council staff that identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander.

Key highlights include:

- Annual NAIDOC Celebration Day at the Lismore Showground held in July 2018
- Participation of Councillors in cultural competency training through the Centre for Cultural Competence Australia to increase respect and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture
- Recruitment of six additional members to Council's Aboriginal Advisory Committee

An Accessible Lismore

Council's Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP) promotes equal rights for all in our community.

It also recognises Council's responsibility to support people with disabilities to access the same human rights as everyone else in the community.

Key achievements in 2018-19 in implementing the DIAP include:

- Bimonthly meetings of the Disability Access and Inclusion Advisory Committee held to provide advice to Council on disability access and inclusion
- Continued provision of a hearing loop in Council Chambers and live streaming of Council's ordinary meetings and events
- Provision of funding for AUSLAN interpreters for meetings
- Release of an updated Missed Business Guide in July 2018, which helps businesses with hints, tips and simple ways to improve accessibility
- Installation of ReadSpeaker technology on Council's website, which provides text to speech services enabling people who are vision impaired to have website content read aloud at the click of a button
- Release of an updated Tradies Guide to Good Access in May 2019, which provides builders with a quick reference guide to Australian standards for accessibility
- AUSLAN-led tours of the Archibald Prize at Lismore Regional Gallery in May and June 2019 (thanks to support from local Quota Clubs) to allow members of the deaf community to form a deeper understanding and connection with the artworks.

“When we see tangible changes like this new technology, we’re making a difference in the community to ensure everyone has equal access.”

- John Zambelli, Disability Access and Inclusion Advisory Group member and ReadSpeaker user



AUSLAN tour guide, Singrid Macdonald, at the Archibald exhibition



John Zambelli, ReadSpeaker user

DID YOU KNOW?

In the last census, 2,747 people or 6.4% of the population in the Local Government Area reported needing help in their day-to-day lives due to disability



Sport and Recreation

Council provides a range of sporting and recreational facilities to encourage active and passive community participation.

Continued investment in our sport and recreation assets also brings significant economic benefits to the region and secures Lismore's reputation as a regional sports hub.

3 major recreational facilities, including GSAC, Lismore Memorial Baths and Nimbin Pool

36 sporting ovals and fields for our active community

121 hectares of open spaces, including parks and gardens



Albert Park Upgrade

In 2018-19, Council used \$4.95 million received from the NSW Government's Regional Growth Fund to progress the major redevelopment of Albert Park Baseball & Softball Complex.

The upgrade is comprised of two stages. Stage 1, now completed, saw the refurbishment of the grandstand, carpark and lighting upgrades, access improvements including paths and ramps, and construction of "bull pens" for baseball practice.

In 2018-19, reconstruction and expansion of Fields 1 and 3 was also completed, in time for a training camp for the Canadian and Australian national baseball teams and international games at the Park in August.



At the end of the financial year, final planning for the reconstruction of Fields 2 and 4 and redevelopment of the clubhouse was underway.

"We have a huge baseball and softball following in Lismore and these players are the talent of the future."

- Leanne Clark, Lismore City Council Events Officer

A boost for shared pathways

Council completed a number of new or upgraded shared pathways in 2018-19.

These included a pathway upgrade along Rotary Drive, a new pathway connecting Goonellabah Shopping Centre to Oliver Avenue, a new shared

pathway around Albert Park, a pathway along Terania St, and a new pathway connecting Kadina High School to Oliver Avenue. These were funded through a progressive NSW Government grant of \$3 million over 3 years to improve shared pathways across Lismore.

GSAC celebrates a milestone

The Goonellabah Sports and Aquatic Centre (GSAC) celebrated its 10th birthday in April 2019. Celebrations included a party and pop-up activities throughout the centre.

Council opened the centre in 2009 as a community facility providing a full range of aquatic, sports and

fitness services to residents of the Lismore local Government Area.

344,633 visitors including
29,400 casual pool visits



Lismore's regional sports hub

In 2018-19, Council continued to progress the major upgrade of Oakes Oval and Crozier Field, which comprise the Lismore Regional Sports hub.

Since the redevelopment commenced in 2017, Council has raised millions in funding to progress the project. This includes an initial \$2.8 million Australian Government grant, which was used to extend the playing field and install a new scoreboard at Oakes Oval to accommodate AFL games. This work recently won Council and contractor/builder Bennett Constructions the 'best sporting facility between \$2-5 million' award at the Northern Regions Building Awards. It also allowed for Lismore's first national AFL match to be held at Oakes Oval in March 2019, attracting 4,918 patrons.

In 2018-19, Council secured a further \$12 million in funding, including NSW and Australian Government grants, and Council's own contribution.

These additional funds will be used for new facilities to meet the specific needs of teams, coaches, players, media and spectators, including:

- New public and player amenities at Oakes Oval and Crozier Field
- An additional grandstand at Oakes Oval
- Extension and refurbishment of Gordon Pavilion
- A spectator arrival plaza and pavilion between Oakes Oval and Crozier Field
- New national-grade cricket nets at Oakes Oval
- An upgrade to the Dawson Street amenities
- New field and perimeter fencing, and general landscaping works.

The new facilities will also provide the long overdue equity for women's sport, as the project will improve facilities and spaces to accommodate women at all sporting levels.

DID YOU KNOW?

The Lismore Regional Sports Hub will attract more than 20,000 additional tourists to our City per year and will create 21 new jobs during the construction phase.



Investing for the future

We've been busy campaigning to secure significant funds to consolidate Lismore as a sport and recreation destination.

Numerous grants in 2018-19 allowed us to progress a number of other key sport and recreation facility upgrades, including:

- Completion of Roder Oval practice cricket facility upgrade, including new netting, fencing, synthetic grass and storage facility
- Completion of Mortimer Oval amenities upgrade
- Completion of Thistles Park lighting upgrade
- Completion of Kadina Park recreational facility upgrade, including fitness and playground equipment
- Progression of the masterplan for Lismore Park, which will facilitate future funding applications
- Commencement of Riverview Park amenities upgrade
- Grant funding secured for Hepburn Park lighting upgrade
- Grant funding secured for Heritage Park recreational facilities upgrade, including waterplay, adventure and toddler play equipment.

B A prosperous and vibrant city



10-year objectives

B1 Our community has diverse business and industry as well as opportunities for investment and growth.

B2 Our city and villages are attractive meeting places that provide for diverse activity and strengthen our social connections.

B3 Our community has a diverse and thriving arts and cultural life.

B4 Our community is connected and convenient.

\$2.9 million spent in 2018-19

Key Highlights

The Lismore Lantern Parade celebrated its 25th anniversary.

Lismore's annual celebration of street food and culinary delights, Eat the Street, won SILVER at the 2018 NSW Tourism Awards and HIGHLY COMMENDED at the 2019 LG Professionals Excellence Awards.

Council sponsored the 10th Lismore Masters Games, which attracted close to 1,700 competitors.

Council provided proportional rate relief to inner CBD businesses in October 2018, totalling \$246,000.

The Lismore CBD shopfront occupancy rate continued to rise, with occupancies at 91% in early 2019, on par with the occupancy rate prior to the March 2017 flood.

A second round of videos for the Lismore Prospectus was launched to showcase advocates from the creative, health, manufacturing and education sectors.

The Lismore Regional Gallery attracted more than 122,000 visitors and hosted 29 major exhibitions, including The Archibald Prize.

The first Lismore Youth Festival was held at The Quadrangle.

Growing the Heart of Lismore

Council provides a range of programs and services to provide opportunities for growth and investment in business and industry and a resilient economy. Council also plays a vital role in activating the CBD.

5 major Council-run festivals and events held

4,043 registered businesses in Lismore LGA

20,000 visitors to Lismore Lantern Parade



300,000 visitors to Visit Lismore website

Your rates at work

Special Rate Variation Expenditure for Business Promotion

Business promotion activities are managed through the Lismore Business Promotion Program (LBPP), which is funded in part by a Special Rate Variation applied to Inner CBD and Urban business ratepayers since 1998, including a Special Business Rate Variation Levy (SBRVL) applied only to Inner CBD business ratepayers. In October 2018, Council reviewed this arrangement and resolved to discontinue the Lismore Business Panel and hand over interim management of the LBPP to Council's Tourism & Events unit. The priority focus areas for this team include rebuilding communication and engagement with CBD stakeholders and improving planning and governance, whilst continuing marketing and promotions and major events. Council also resolved to conduct a review of the SBRVL process and structure, a process which will continue in to 2019-20.

In 2018-19, a total of \$120,175 was collected from business rate payers and expended in full, with additional funds contributed by Council:

Expenditure Program for 2018-19	
CBD Events and Place Making	60,000
Marketing	55,000
Lismore Business Awards	1,737
Contingency for initiatives	8,438
City Centre Manager role	0
Total	120,175

Some key achievements in 2018-19 include:

- Event management for the award-winning Eat the Street Lismore festival
- Sponsorship of Lismore Business Chamber and Industry Awards to showcase Lismore businesses and broaden the appeal of local businesses
- Sponsorship of the 10th Lismore Masters Games in September 2018, which attracted close to 1700 competitors to Lismore over the three-day event
- Sponsorship and marketing for the 25th Lismore Lantern Parade, which attracted 20,000 spectators
- Ongoing management of the Visit Lismore website (www.visitlismore.com.au) which attracted over 300,000 unique visitors, a 14% increase compared to 2017-18
- Marketing and event management of Santa's Wonderland, including photos with Santa, letters to Santa, a treasure hunt, window display competition, and major retail giveaways, to attract shoppers to the CBD in the lead up to Christmas.

A full list of activities funded by the SBRVL for 2018-19 can be found in Appendix 1: Statutory Information.



Supporting businesses in the LGA

In 2018-19, Council supported numerous businesses looking to establish, grow and diversify in the Local Government Area.

This support included help in progressing Development Applications, investigating site suitability, working with prospective developers, and facilitating relationships with government agencies.

Council also contributed to the 'In Good Company' program, a partnership between neighbouring

councils, State and Federal Governments and Southern Cross University. The program showcases the best of business in the Northern Rivers and aims to keep businesses in the region.

In February 2019, Council launched a second round of videos for the Lismore Prospectus that showcased the creative, health, manufacturing and education sectors and which continue to promote private sector investment opportunities.

Award-winning Eat the Street

Eat the Street Lismore again attracted huge crowds to the CBD for a celebration of food, entertainment, music and cooking demonstrations this year.

Held in March 2019, two main streets in the CBD were closed to traffic and transformed into a sea of marquees showcasing regional cuisine, boutique beverages and stalls brimming with local artisan products. Key drawcards this year also included a masterclass with celebrity chef, Matt Golinski, a foraging tour with local forager Peter Hardwick, and a mixology masterclass with The Loft's head mixologist, Howard Johnson.

In the past year, Lismore's annual celebration of culinary delights has continued to sweep up awards, winning:

SILVER at the 2018 NSW Tourism Awards
HIGHLY COMMENDED Local Economic Contribution nod at the 2019 LG Professionals Excellence Awards

DID YOU KNOW?



26,264 people attended the fifth Eat the Street Lismore food festival in March 2019

Projects we progressed

In 2018-19, we progressed or completed a number of projects to revitalise the CBD and surrounds.

These included:

- Securing \$1.6 million in NSW Government grants for the revitalisation of the CBD
- Installation of a rainbow painted road pavement treatment in Magellan St was completed in December 2018
- In partnership with RealArtworks and Creative Lismore, completion of the 'Christmas Art in the Heart' project in December 2018, which showcased local art through installations, projections and window graphics in vacant shopfronts in the CBD
- Installation of the annual recycled Christmas tree in December 2018, featuring 49 second-hand umbrellas, 18 meters of recycled tinsel, 778 salvaged screws, and 2,540 LED fairy light bulbs donated by Bunnings
- A Council resolution in June 2019 to conduct an Expression of Interest for the redevelopment of the Harold Fredericks Car Park site to include serviced apartment accommodation, commercial office space, public car parking and public open space linking the Quad to Dawson Street
- The release of a discussion paper in May 2019 to inform the community consultation process for a new Economic Development Strategy to be developed in 2019-20.

Nurturing Creative Spirit

Council promotes a thriving arts and cultural scene for residents and visitors through support for creative industries, which make a significant contribution to the local economy, as well as through the provision of the Lismore Regional Gallery and Quadrangle, which have transformed the city centre and showcase the region's creative spirit.

122,089 visitors to the Gallery

15,845 Gallery group tour participants

484 Friends of the Gallery

29 major exhibitions staged



Lismore Regional Gallery

There is no doubt that Lismore Regional Gallery and its neighbouring Quadrangle space have transformed the city centre.

In 2018-19, the Gallery attracted more than 122,000 visitors during the financial year, more than double the number expected.

It has also continued to attract attention and prestige from further afield, including the following awards:

WINNER of a Heritage award and **COMMENDATION** for Public Architecture at the 2018 NSW Country Division Architecture Awards

Architect: Dominic Finlay Jones Architects

WINNER of a Museums & Galleries of NSW IMAGinE Award in Capacity Building, Capital & Sustainability Programs category

DID YOU KNOW?

Lismore Regional Gallery was the first regional gallery in the country to initiate AUSLAN-led tours of gallery exhibitions run by and for the deaf community.



The Archibald Prize comes to Lismore

The Archibald Prize 2018 exhibition was on show at Lismore Regional Gallery between April-June 2019. First awarded in 1921, it is one of Australia's oldest and most prestigious art awards. Now in its 97th year, the award toured only four regional centres in NSW, including Lismore.

The exhibition was opened by Yvette Coppersmith, who won the 2018 Archibald with her self-portrait. Other portraits included actors Guy Pearce and David Wenham, singers Jimmy Barnes and Courtney Barnett, and politician Gladys Berejiklian.

"There is something incredibly unique about The Archibald Prize, in its ability to truly capture the imagination of not just the Australian art world, but the broader public." said Brett Adlington, Lismore Regional Gallery Director.



Celebrating Bundjalung heritage

In May 2019, The Quad played host to Dungarimba Wandarahn (Lismore place of learning). The large-scale digital installation by internationally acclaimed multimedia artist, Craig Walsh, was inspired by the stories and recollections of Bundjalung Elder Aunty Irene Harrington, who attended the original Lismore High School in the 1950s. It featured visual projections and audio installations on both nature and architecture to explore two cultures and ways of learning: Bundjalung and Western.

With support from the NSW Government's Heritage Near Me program, the work was created in collaboration with Southern Cross University's Indigenous School Gribi Wandarahn and Lindisfarne Anglican Grammar students, researchers and arts practitioners. It is estimated that 4,000 people attended the free event over its four nights.

In June 2019, Art on Bundjalung Country, an Indigenous art market, was also held at The Quad,



where visitors had a unique opportunity to purchase authentic Indigenous artwork and meet the makers.

The market showcased some of the region's most celebrated artists, including Digby Moran, Michael Philp, and Frances Belle Parker, as well as providing a platform for emerging artists.

The market was a collaboration between Arts Northern Rivers and Lismore Regional Gallery.

“[Dungarimba Wandarahn] celebrates the resilience and commitment of Aboriginal people to retain traditional culture and language. It reclaims the Lismore Quadrangle as a historic ‘place of learning’.”

Lismore's first youth festival

In April 2019, the first Lismore Youth Festival was held at The Quad, to coincide with Youth Week 2019.

Curated by Indigenous youth mentors Dream Bigger, the free one-day festival showcased emerging artists aged 14-19 across all artforms and attracted 2,000 visitors. The goal of the festival was to generate a positive youth culture through creative and performing arts and to create a space

of ownership and community pride for youth in Lismore and surrounding areas.

Festival highlights included panel discussions exploring the future of youth arts, a poetry slam competition, dance workshops, a visual arts exhibition, and an all-ages concert featuring Lismore alt rockers LSAS and selected singers from the Lismore Young Songwriters Competition.

Projects we progressed

In 2018-19, we progressed or completed a number of projects to support arts and culture in the Local Government Area. These included:

- Securing \$250,000 in funding support from the NSW Government towards the acquisition of the Hannah Cabinet on exhibition at the Lismore Regional Gallery
- Commencement of After School workshops at Lismore Regional Gallery for primary and secondary students in February 2019
- Lismore's first ever Playground Festival held at The Quad in October 2018, a free one-day experiential festival for children and their families

C Our natural environment



10-year objectives

C1 Our waterways and catchments are healthy.

C2 We are committed to resource recovery, waste management and recycling innovation.

C3 We are committed to environmental sustainability.

C4 Our diverse natural environment is protected and enhanced.

\$24 million spent in 2018-19

Key Highlights

A total of 31 new individual landholder projects commenced through the Rural Landholder Initiative, with a total on-ground investment of \$118,491.

A total of 3,612 koala food trees were planted, and over 10 hectares of koala habitat rehabilitated.

New signage and pavement markings were installed along Wyrallah Road and Tuckurimba Road in an effort to reduce koala road deaths.

For its role in the Lismore Community Solar initiative, Council won a Local Government Professionals Australia 2018 National Federation Award for Partnerships and Collaboration, and a Climate Council's 2018 Cities Power Partnership National Award for Community Engagement Achievement.

Despite organisational growth, Council reduced its greenhouse gas emissions by 21% and decreased its total energy consumption by 12%.

New water stations were installed in Woodlark Street to provide people with access to free drinking water.

Council launched a new #RecycleRight campaign to assist residents in improving recycling practices.

Approximately 480 tonnes of debris were collected from city and village streets, which would otherwise have ended up in stormwater drains and waterways.

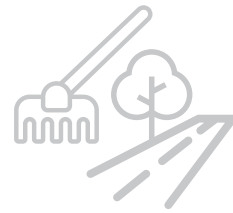
Supporting Biodiversity

Council works hard to protect and enhance our region's biodiversity and conserve our environment to grow habitats, improve water quality, and provide natural amenity for all.

10,677 native trees planted

3,612 koala food trees planted

63.6 hectares of native vegetation regenerated



1.75km of roadside weed control

Your rates at work

Special Rate Variation for Biodiversity Management

Since 2016, Council's Biodiversity Management Strategy (BMS) has been funded by a Special Rate Variation (SRV) applied to Farmland, Residential Rural and Residential Urban/Village ratepayers in the CBD.

In 2018-19, a total of \$519,173 was collected from ratepayers. Of this, \$464,590 was expended for a range of activities. The major reasons for the difference in income and expenditure include the delay of scheduled operations due to weather, and the postponement of some projects until a full review of the BMS is completed in 2019-20. The unspent funds will be carried over to next financial year.

Expenditure Program for 2018-19	
Cleaning up our own Backyard	
Planning and processes	\$23,096
Supporting the community	\$42,465
Working with landholders	\$251,820
Working in urban environment	\$110,273
Koala Plan of Management	\$36,937
Total	\$464,590

Some key achievements in 2018-19 include:

- Completion of vegetation mapping across remaining areas of LGA
- Weed control undertaken on 1.75 km of high conservation value roadside vegetation
- Financial support and training provided to 10 urban Landcare groups
- Seven biodiversity events and workshops held in both rural and urban areas
- Biodiversity Volunteers Breakfast held in October 2018 to recognise people and groups working to protect and enhance our environment
- Bush regeneration work on 63.6 hectares of native vegetation and 19.1 hectares of urban reserves, with a total of 10,677 trees planted
- Vehicle-activated signage and pavement markings installed on a stretch of road of high roadkill risk to improve protection of threatened species on Council roads
- Continuation of the Rural Landholder Initiative to support biodiversity conservation in rural areas of the LGA, including partnerships with both individual landholders and industry groups
- Weed management on 43 hectares of koala habitat, with 3,612 koala food trees planted, and revegetation of over 10 hectares of koala habitat.

A full list of activities funded in 2018-19 by the SRV can be found in Appendix 1: Statutory Information.

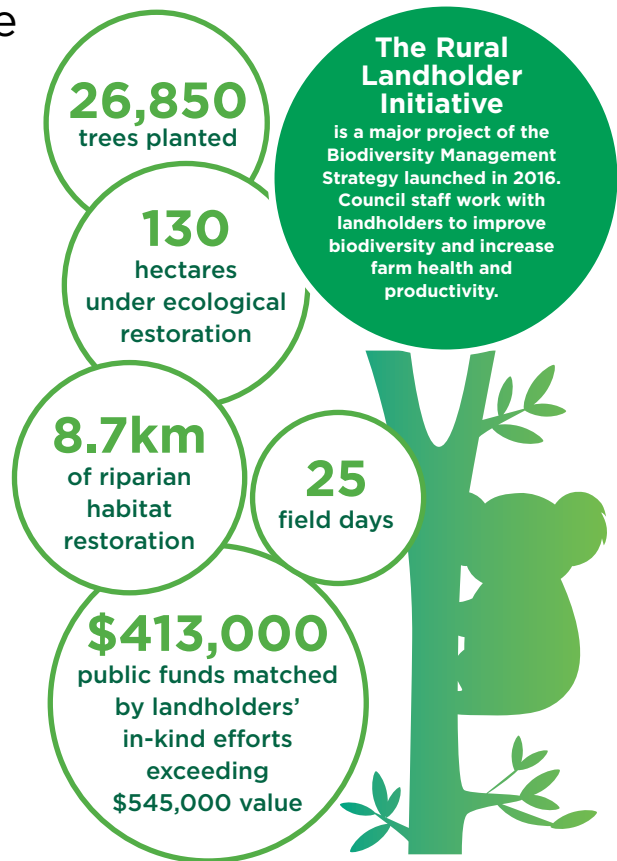
Rural Landholder Initiative

In 2018-19, a total of 31 new individual landholder projects commenced through two fresh rounds of the RLI, with on-ground investment totalling \$118,491. These rounds were supported by a NSW Government Environment Trust grant, which contributed a total of \$70,000 to the Initiative.

Support was also provided to landholders through four field days, covering topics such as low-cost approaches to restore rainforest and koala habitat, enhancing native bee habitat, sustainable grazing, and camphor laurel management.

In addition, three rural industry partnership projects progressed through the RLI, including with the North Coast Meat Co-operative to engage with graziers on healthy soil and water; with Golden Grove Inc on the benefits of biodiversity for tea tree plantations; and with the Australian Native Bee Company and macadamia growers on enhancing native bee habitat to support macadamia production.

This brings the total number of projects which have commenced through the RLI to 80 since the program began in 2016.



New koala zones

In November 2018, Council installed new signage and pavement markings along Wyrallah Road and Tuckurimba Road in koala blackspots to encourage drivers to slow down. These road sections have the highest known rate of koala deaths due to vehicle strikes in Lismore, with people often travelling faster than the posted 80km/hr speed limit.

Most vehicle strike incidents in the Lismore area occur between August and November each year. Unfortunately, most koalas hit by vehicles die as a result of their injuries.

Research suggests that most drivers become complacent over time if they regularly use roads with passive road signs displaying a silhouette on a bright background, and that these types of signs are ineffective at reducing wildlife roadkill in Australia.

However, Council's Environmental Strategies team expects that the enhanced signs which include flashing lights, speed limit displays, and bright road pavement markings will help to change driver behaviour and reduce the number of koala road deaths. Preliminary data is promising, with significant reduction in traffic speed through the koala zones on Wyrallah and Tuckurimba Roads.



DID YOU KNOW?

In the last 15 years, there have been 470 recorded incidents involving koalas being hit by vehicles in the Lismore Local Government Area.



Environmental Sustainability

Council is actively working to protect our natural assets, use our resources wisely, and grow sustainability. We are committed to responsible waste management, reducing our impact on the environment, and becoming a model of sustainability.

17 solar systems

21% reduction in Council's greenhouse gas emissions

15% of Council's energy generated by renewable sources



96,233 tonnes of waste collected from households

The War on Waste

Last financial year was a year of consolidation for Council's commercial waste operations, involving new waste recovery practices, forensic auditing, and commencement of a range of remediation projects.

For the past few years, Council's waste operations have been under pressure from a number of sources. These include:

- A waste levy imposed by the NSW Government, which requires Council to pay a contribution for each tonne of waste received at the facility.
- Strict Environment Protection Authority (EPA) regulations which govern waste management, including handling, storing, transporting, processing, recycling and disposal of waste.
- The impact of China's new recycling policy (China National Sword), which commenced in early 2018 and has significantly reduced the profitability of some recyclable materials.
- The impact of the 10c Container Deposit Scheme, which has decreased market demand for recyclables that arrive at the waste facility via yellow bins due to their relatively higher contamination rates.

Some of the key achievements during 2018-19 in responding to these pressures include:

- Finding innovative uses and new markets for commodities from our current recycling practices, such as the inclusion of our glass sand as a concrete additive (for example, in concrete road surfaces) which is an area of significant growth potential.
- Completion of planning and commencement of construction of landfill Cell 2B to provide additional landfill capacity at the waste facility
- Completion of some key safety measures across the waste site, including an extra fire exit on the recently constructed commercial waste sorting facility.
- Commencement of a new #RecycleRight campaign to educate residents to put the right materials in the right bin and highlight ways to help Council reduce recycling costs (see next page).

Council's longer-term focus will be on ensuring the continued commercial viability of waste operations, including looking at different ways to manage waste.

DID YOU KNOW?

China National Sword limits the contamination rate of imported recycled materials to 0.5-1%. By comparison, Council's average contamination rate in 2018-19 was 15%. It is anticipated this number will decrease through the new #RecycleRight campaign.



Recycle Right!

In December 2018, Council launched a new #RecycleRight campaign, calling on residents to follow six simple recycling routines to ensure clean and uncontaminated recyclables that can be sold to local markets and thus kept out of landfill.

These include:

1. Keep it simple
2. Keep out soft plastics
3. Keep out small items
4. Keep it safe
5. Keep it clean
6. Keep it loose

The campaign was developed with our neighbouring councils as a region-wide campaign across the Northern Rivers in response to China's new recycling policy (China National Sword), which has significantly changed the recycling industry in

Australia and around the world. There are now far tighter controls on the contamination of recyclables, which has created a catalyst for change, forcing improved recycling practices and the development of new technologies and industries within Australia to support the processing and manufacture of goods using recycled content.

Preliminary data on waste collected since the campaign rollout shows that more community education is required to ensure that clean and correct recycling materials are placed in the right bins. For example, a higher than usual level of contamination (plastic and glass) arriving through household green bins resulted in a temporary cessation of compost sales at the end of financial year. Also, roughly 15% of yellow bin contents collected from households during 2018-19 were not able to be recycled. This equates to nearly 6,000 tonnes of contaminated recyclables that were sent to landfill.

DID YOU KNOW?

You can download a handy #RecycleRight recycling guide fridge magnet from Council's website or pick one up for free from the Corporate Centre or Lismore and Goonellabah libraries.



<p>Keep it Simple </p> <p>Only recycle these items</p> <p>GLASS BOTTLES & JARS PLASTIC CONTAINERS PAPER & CARDBOARD STEEL AND ALUMINIUM</p>	<p>Keep Out Soft Plastics </p> <p>No plastic bags or wrapping</p>	<p>Keep Out Small Items </p> <p>Nothing smaller than a credit card</p>
<p>Keep it Safe </p> <p>Keep out strapping, hose, netting, wires, cords and cables</p>	<p>Keep it Clean </p> <p>Rinse or wipe out containers</p>	<p>Keep it Loose </p> <p>Don't bag or box your recyclables</p>

KEEP OUT: Nappies, food, fabric, cords, rope, dirty paper & cardboard, takeaway coffee cups & lids, meat & biscuit trays, & polystyrene.

Council's renewable energy goal

Adopted in 2014, Council's Renewable Energy Master Plan (REMP) sets out the pathway by which Council will strive to generate 100% of its electricity needs from renewable sources by 2023. To date, several energy efficiency projects have been completed, including air conditioning upgrades, heat reflective paint, and solar hot water, and installation of 17 solar systems, including two major solar farms.

In 2018-19, these measures allowed us to generate 15% of our total energy needs. We also reduced our overall energy consumption by 12% and our total carbon footprint by 21% compared to the previous year.

A key initiative for 2018-19 was the replacement of 2,200 streetlights around Lismore with new, energy efficient LED lights. The city-wide retrofit project is expected to save approximately \$188,000 per year in energy costs and reduce carbon footprint by roughly 250 tonnes per year.

The REMP's flagship project, Lismore Community Solar, continued to receive national recognition

for its innovative community funding model. As Australia's first ever community-funded, Council-operated floating solar farm, the initiative won two new awards in 2018-19, including:

WINNER of Local Government Professionals Australia 2018 National Federation Award for Partnerships and Collaboration

WINNER of Climate Council's 2018 Cities Power Partnership National Award for Community Engagement Achievement.

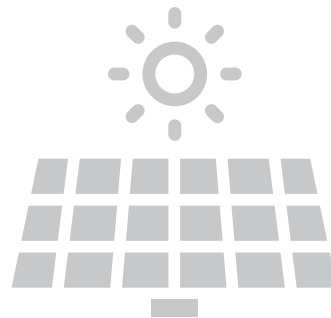


Photo: Suntrix



DID YOU KNOW?

Council's energy consumption has decreased by 23% in the past 5 years, saving around \$630,000 in energy costs.



Your rates at work

Stormwater Management Services Levy

Council is responsible for capital works, maintenance, operation and renewals of an extensive stormwater management system valued at over \$64 million. In 2018-19, Council collected \$381,924 in levies, of which \$114,589 was spent on inspection, maintenance, and operational costs, as well as planned capital and renewal works in East Lismore, Girards Hill and Goonellebah.



Constructed wetlands at Slaters Creek

The remaining \$267,335 of unspent funds were reserved for future stormwater capital projects from the Stormwater Management Plan.

The stormwater management system is a complex network of 'grey' and 'green' infrastructure. It includes devices such as litter and sediment traps, rain filtration gardens, constructed wetlands and street sweeper trucks, which help to prevent tonnes of pollutants and sediments from entering our waterways each year.



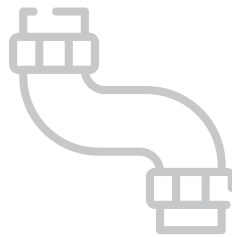
Rain garden in Woodlark Street

181 km of stormwater pipes, culverts, lined and unlined channels

5434 stormwater pits

38 bio-detention basins and filtration structures

1 street sweeper truck



DID YOU KNOW?

The street sweeper truck collects approximately 480 tonnes of debris from our city and village streets every year. Dust, dirt, leaves, tyre rubber, litter, plastics and a range of contaminants that would otherwise end up in our stormwater lines, creeks and rivers are removed to the waste facility for land fill.

Projects we progressed

- Engaged consultants to develop an odour management plan and construct a new leachate dam to support the expansion of Council's composting facility
- Commenced construction of Landfill Cell 2B in March 2019, with works expected to be completed in late 2019
- Commenced procurement of a wheel wash for trucks leaving the waste facility to reduce sediment in the environment and address road safety issues at the waste site entrance.
- Installed water stations in Woodlark Street in September 2018 to provide people with access to free drinking water
- Commenced a review of Work Health and Safety systems and processes in March 2019.
- In July 2018, Council resolved to develop a policy regarding phasing out single-use plastics at all Council venues and events sponsored by Council by July 2020
- In April 2019, Council called on residents to join the 160 Litre Challenge by finding innovative ways to reduce water consumption. The Challenge is an initiative of Rous County Council, the region's bulk water supplier, in conjunction with Lismore City, Ballina Shire, Byron Shire and Richmond Valley councils.

D Our built environment



10-year objectives

D1 Our city and village services are well managed and maintained.

D2 Our built environment is managed and enhanced to meet the needs of our growing community.

D3 Our land use planning caters for all sectors of the community.

D4 Our community has a diversity of affordable housing options.

\$65.5 million spent in 2018-19

Key Highlights

Council graded 300 km of unsealed roads, resurfaced 63 km of sealed roads, and repaired roughly 25,000 potholes.

Council's upgraded South Lismore Sewage Treatment Plant won a 2019 NSW Local Government Excellence Award for "Asset Management & Infrastructure Initiatives over \$1.5m".

Council secured \$4.6 million in additional grant funding to remediate landslips which occurred in the wake of the significant flood event in 2017.

\$8.2 million in grant funding was received to progress a flood channel in South Lismore.

\$10.8 million was spent on building and renewing water and wastewater infrastructure.

Council determined 434 development applications and 272 construction certificates, with an average processing time of 39 days.

Assets and Infrastructure

Infrastructure assets deliver important services and to communities. Within our built environment, they comprise roads, water, stormwater, wastewater, buildings, quarry, and land. Council's Asset Management Strategy allows us to create, acquire, maintain, operate, rehabilitate and dispose of these assets.

300 km
of unsealed roads
graded and 63km
of sealed roads
resurfaced

\$54 million
road infrastructure
backlog



\$10.8 million
spent on building
and renewing water
and wastewater
infrastructure

Fixing the Roads

Council's largest asset group is its transport network, which provides essential access throughout Lismore LGA for residents, businesses and visitors.

In 2018-19, Council spent \$15.5 million on preserving, restoring and enhancing the 1200 km of roads across the Local Government Area. Some of the major works included:

- 25,000 potholes repaired (approximately)
- 300 km of unsealed roads were graded
- 63 km of roads were resurfaced
- 1.5 km of roads were reconstructed
- 1 bridge was replaced

In recent years, maintaining the area's vast road network has been an ongoing challenge for Council and there remains a \$54 million backlog.

Some of the reasons include:

- The road network has never received the funding it requires to be expanded and maintained

The road network includes:

780 km of sealed roads

420 km of unsealed roads

- As a result, service delivery has consistently not met the expectations of the community
- The expectations of the community has changed, putting further pressure on the budget
- The cost of roadworks and labour has risen faster than revenue such as rates can keep up.

Council has continued to look for internal savings to free up more money for roads and has campaigned for additional funding from NSW and Australian Governments. This included \$1.6 million in grants received in 2018-19, including from the Black Spot Program and the Savings Lives on Country Roads Program. However, there is still a significant shortfall as the gap increases every year as costs rise. To meet this shortfall, in April 2019, Council commenced planning for a community consultation process for a Special Rate Variation to further increase funding for roads.

DID YOU KNOW?

Lismore roads are upcycled with glass! We recycle your bottles, jars and crockery at our waste facility and crush them into glass sand, which is used in our road base.



Remediating landslips

Council previously secured funding of \$1.1 million from the National Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements program for the repair and remediation of a major landslip located at Beardow Street, Lismore Heights, which occurred in the wake of the significant flood event in 2017. Remediation commenced in July 2018, however, excavation works uncovered historical industrial waste materials. In consultation with the Environment Protection Authority (EPA), works were suspended while all contaminated soil on site was removed and disposed of safely.

The change in scope required Council to renegotiate funding arrangements in March 2019, as the cost to complete the remediation works increased by an additional \$2.4 million.

Council has continued to work with Roads and Maritime Services, the EPA, and contractors to

ensure all contaminated materials were removed from the site by 30 June 2019, ahead of planned work to reinstate the pavement in Beardow Street in October 2019.

Another significant landslip within the Lismore Local Government Area occurred on Oakey Creek Road as a result of the same flood event. This site posed significant geotechnical challenges due to the soil types and topography.

Council has been able to secure funding of \$2.2 million to remediate the landslip. The work involves boring 52 piles to depths of up to 10 metres, which will act as a retaining wall structure to stabilise the site. This work commenced at the end of the financial year and was expected to be completed by early 2020.

New Sewage Treatment Plant

Construction of a new Sewage Treatment Plant in South Lismore was approaching completion and commissioning at the end of the financial year.

At a total cost of \$26 million, the project is the largest project (by spend) ever undertaken by Council and represents a key step toward expanding the capacity of Lismore as a regional city. It has increased sewage treatment capacity from 15,000 people to 22,500 people, catering for expected population increases when North Lismore Plateau is opened up to residential development.

The plant is the first in Australia to incorporate a combination of advanced technologies to optimise efficiency and environmental performance. This includes using optimised Intermittent Decant Extended Aeration, or IDEA, in place of chemicals to treat sewage. This involves a repeated process of blowing air into the bottom of a massive tank containing the sewage, with the oxygen encouraging the growth of bacteria to clean up the sludge blanket. The plant also generates 30 per cent of its electricity via a new, purpose-built 334kW solar farm, which was commissioned in January 2019.

This will deliver operational savings of \$400,000 per annum for chemical usage, reduced biosolids

disposal and electricity, saving ratepayers money over the entire lifecycle of the plant.

In recognition of innovation and environmental best-practice, Council won a prestigious award for the plant:

WINNER of a 2019 NSW Local Government Excellence Award for "Asset Management & Infrastructure Initiatives over \$1.5m"



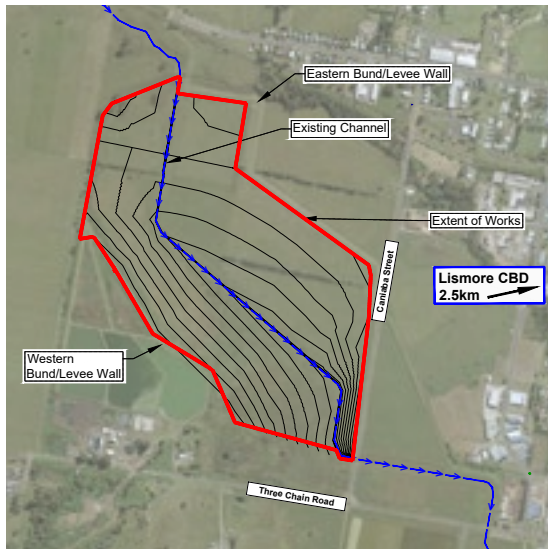
Lismore City Council staff accepting the Award
Photo: Local Government Professionals Australia

Flood mitigation in South Lismore

In March 2019, Council secured an \$8.2 million grant from the NSW Government for flood mitigation works in South Lismore. The project involves diverting floodwater overflow from Leycester Creek around Lismore Regional Airport. The overflow will re-enter the river system below the city, providing residents and businesses with more time to plan their evacuation in major flood events.

Council commenced a tender process in March 2019 calling for a principal contractor to undertake bulk earthworks. Around 410,000 cubic metres of soil will be excavated from a 58-hectare parcel of Council land and used to fill nearby industrial land within Lismore's floodplain to facilitate the expansion of the South Lismore Industrial Estate. This will assist Council to attract and retain new business in the Estate to help drive economic growth in Lismore.

Premier Gladys Berejiklian visited the site in March 2019 to kick off the project. The works are expected to take around 12 months to complete.



“This is a significant investment in our future as a regional city. Projects such as this help us build our credentials as a business hub for regional, state and national industry and enterprise.”

- Mayor Isaac Smith

Projects we progressed

In 2018-19, Council progressed several other water and wastewater projects:

- Council completed concept designs for wastewater infrastructure to service Pineapple Road and commenced property and easement acquisition negotiations with affected landholders.
- Council continued negotiations with affected property owners for the acquisition of a reservoir site to support the North Lismore Plateau development and commenced investigations into options for design of the new water supply.
- Financial modelling was completed to support the update of Council's Water and Wastewater Asset Management Plan
- Council continued the Nimbin Water Supply Upgrade works, with stage 2 nearing completion. These works included the installation of a new main, customer connections and a pump station. Council also received a \$50,000 grant from the NSW Government in April 2019 to bring forward stage 3 of the project to address water quality issues.

Planning for the LGA's Future

Council plays a vital role as a regulator for Building, Development and Environmental control, to deliver housing outcomes for the Local Government Area by assessing rezoning and Development Applications (DA) and conducting inspections to ensure compliance with relevant planning controls, laws, and standards.

434 development applications determined

250 construction certificates assessed

2 Local Environmental Plan amendments determined

2 active Voluntary Planning Agreements



Growing the built environment

Building new and sustainable communities and increasing supply is important for housing affordability. In 2018-19, Council determined 434 DAs with a total value of \$72.6 million and conducted 1410 inspections of new building work. Council is committed to ongoing improvement of its development system to make it easier and therefore more attractive to people wanting to build a home in the Local Government Area. In recent years, Council has introduced new policies to reduce the time it takes to determine DAs. This includes providing pre-lodgement support to help applicants improve the quality of their applications

to make the assessment process as fast and smooth as possible and the introduction of the Electronic Lodgement Portal (ELP), which enables Council to undertake a preliminary review prior to applications being made lawful.

In 2018-19, the average processing time for a residential DA was 39 days, which meets the Development Assessment Best Practice Guide target of 40 days, set by the Department of Planning & Environment Guidelines.

Voluntary Planning Agreements

As at 30 June 2019, there were two approved development consents that were subject to a Voluntary Planning Agreement (VPA). These include:

1. An approved subdivision development at Cameron Road, McLeans Ridges, which is subject to a VPA for road improvements and a hall upgrade to meet the demand for services and facilities arising from the increased residential population
2. An approved commercial building at 214 Molesworth Street, Lismore, which is subject to a VPA for the provision of 34 formalised public car parking spaces in the Lismore CBD to compensate for the loss of publicly available car spaces on the subject land

DID YOU KNOW?

A VPA is a planning tool that allows planning authorities and developers to work together to deliver innovative infrastructure outcomes alongside development proposals. This way, the whole community can benefit from development.



E Leadership and Participation



10-year objectives

E1

We engage and communicate with our community.

E2

We collaborate with other agencies to achieve great outcomes.

E3

Our decisions and actions are open, transparent, effective and in the interests of all.

E4

We provide effective management and responsible governance.

E5

We continue to grow our reputation and capacity as a regional city.

\$10.5 million spent in 2018-19

Key Highlights

Discussions commenced with neighbouring councils and government partners to explore a possible City or Regional Deal to fast-track investment for growth in Lismore City and the region.

\$6.1 million cash deficit reduction plan established, and a transformation programme commenced to modernise Council and improve accountability.

33 projects from the Imagine Lismore Delivery Program deferred or cancelled in recognition of financial challenges.

Plan established to recognise previous Government requests for investigation of a Special Rate Variation.

\$523,000 provided in financial assistance, including \$113,000 in small grants for 22 projects delivered by community groups.

Lismore Library won a NSW Public Library Association Award for 'Innovation in Outreach Services'.

First strategic plan for Richmond Tweed Regional Library adopted in May 2019 to provide long-term direction for regional library services.

152 engagement projects and surveys run through Your Say Lismore, Council's online engagement portal, with 7,000 visitors to the site.

Code of Conduct was revised in line with new government requirements and training for Councillors and senior staff commenced.

Growing our Regional City

We are intensely proud of Lismore's regional city status. For tens of thousands of people living on the NSW North Coast, it is considered the business, sporting, education and medical capital of the Northern Rivers. Council continues to work together with various partners to grow Lismore's reputation and capacity as a regional city.

135,000 enquiries at the Visitor Information Centres

\$523,000 in financial assistance provided to community groups, rural halls and CBD businesses

19,814 RTRL members living in Lismore LGA



Working with government agencies

Strategic and effective partnerships are critical to the growth and success of economic development in the Lismore Local Government Area. To ensure this success, Council continues to work collaboratively with neighbouring councils, local institution providers, and local industry groups and networks to achieve regional outcomes that benefit the community.

In 2018-19, some examples of this included the #RecycleRight campaign to improve the commercial value of the region's waste (see p. 33), and the 'In Good Company' program to showcase Northern Rivers businesses (see p. 25).

Council also plays an essential role in lobbying government to secure ongoing support to deliver infrastructure improvements to Lismore and its surrounding villages. In 2018-19, Council aggressively pursued and secured millions in new grant funding from the NSW and Australian Governments, including:

- \$10.5 million for the Lismore Regional Sports hub (see p. 21)
- \$8.2 million for flood mitigation works in South Lismore (see p. 40)
- \$4.4 million for a new instrument landing system at Lismore Regional Airport
- \$1.6 million for Lismore CBD revitalisation

During the year, General Manager, Shelley Oldham, and Mayor, Isaac Smith, also travelled to Canberra to commence discussions with representatives from State and Federal Governments and Regional Cities Australia about Lismore's strategic placement in the Northern Rivers region.

Council will continue to work with neighbouring councils and government partners to shape and scope a possible City or Regional Deal. A City Deal is a 10-year funded partnership between three levels of government and the community to fast track investment in infrastructure, economic stimulus, technology and people-based services to achieve a shared vision for growth.

Regional collaboration was a key theme at the Future Northern Rivers Forum held in June 2019, at Southern Cross University's Lismore campus. The event was attended by students and regional leaders, such as Bernard Salt, one of Australia's leading demographers, who encouraged collaboration between neighbouring councils and outrageous ambition in the pursuit of a prosperous future for the region.

DID YOU KNOW?

Lismore City generates over \$2.14 billion in Gross Regional Product annually and the Lismore LGA is host to some 4,000 businesses and over 20,000 jobs.

Building community through giving

Council also collaborates with community groups and individuals to achieve great outcomes for the community by providing financial assistance in accordance with section 356 of the Local Government Act 1993.

In 2018-19, we provided small grants to 22 community groups within the Local Government Area via the Annual Community Grants Scheme (ACGS). These grants funded projects to benefit the community, with a total value of \$113,000.

Some of the community projects that were successfully completed in 2018-19 with ACGS support include:

- Minor upgrades to Dorrroughby Hall and Whian Whian Memorial Hall
- Installation of air-conditioning at the Rochdale Community Theatre auditorium
- Installation of solar panels on the roof of the Lismore Country Women's Association Rooms
- Purchase of computer equipment for the Lismore Croquet Club to digitise competition and tournament administration
- An illustrated book about the history and heritage of Lismore CBD developed by the Richmond River Historical Society and partners
- Various community festivals and competitions around the LGA, including the Annual Spring Garden Competition, Reel Abrupt Film Festival, Annual Lismore Eisteddfod, Nimbin Youth Film Festival, and Dance Rites Trials

Regional library services

Richmond Tweed Regional Library (RTRL) provides a modern and vibrant library service for nearly 250,000 residents across the Northern Rivers region. As the executive council of RTRL, Lismore City Council works with Tweed Shire, Byron Shire, and Ballina Shire Councils to ensure the commitments in the Deed of Agreement, signed in 2017, are met.

In 2018-19, Council conducted extensive community consultation to guide the preparation of the first strategic plan for RTRL. The RTRL Strategic Plan 2019-2029 was signed by the RTRL Committee in May 2019 and provides the long-term direction needed to build the libraries of the future that will meet and fulfil the needs of the community.

Library services involve more than just lending books. The RTRL's mission is to occupy a central

place in community life, by fulfilling learning needs and facilitating community connections and wellbeing.

In November 2018, the Lismore Library won a prestigious award for its efforts to enhance and promote the Lismore Lantern Parade in support of the community:

WINNER of a NSW Public Library Association Award for 'Innovation in Outreach Services'

Library staff worked hard to make each of the library's 31 windows light up like stained glass to celebrate the Parade and inspire a sense of pride and shared identity among its visitors. The incredible result is also the feature cover for this annual report.



Photo: Kurt Petersen

DID YOU KNOW?

1,736,739 items were borrowed from RTRL branches in 2018-19. This is the highest number of total loans for a public library service in NSW

A Responsible Council

Council has systems and policies in place to ensure decisions and actions are open, transparent and in the interests of all. It also has a responsibility to ensure it is as efficient and effective as possible internally, so it is able to provide the most efficient and effective services externally as well.

7,000 visitors to Council's online community engagement portal

23 applications for public access to Council information granted in full or in part

\$6.1 million deficit addressed

Council transformation

In February 2019, Council's new General Manager, Shelley Oldham, announced a major overhaul of Council's finances to ensure the future sustainability of the organisation.

This involved several key actions. First, Council resolved in March 2019 to create a trial directorate, Corporate Services, with Dr Graeme Towers hired on a one-year contract. Second, all Directors and Managers undertook a zero-based budgeting process as a part of this transformation. This process addressed the \$6.1m cash deficit reported to Council in February. The deficit reduction plan includes:

- \$470,000 in operational efficiencies at GSAC
- \$3.6 million reduction of quarry operating costs by utilising existing stockpiles
- Reframing waste supply contracts to better reflect true costs
- Tightening controls on high cost projects such as Landfill Cell 2B at the waste facility
- Continuing with the staff employment amnesty.

The zero-based budgeting process also provided Council with a much better understanding of the true cost of delivering the services expected by the community. This will inform better decision-making in the future.

Third, Council initiated several operational and system changes. This included the commencement of an upgrade to the core financial system and the modernisation of finance processes, the development of a Governance Framework for Council, to renew the focus on governance, and the reinvigoration of Council's approach to Workplace Health and Safety (WHS) with a commitment to ensure that all staff return home safely and without injury every day.

Finally, projects commenced to improve business efficiency and accountability in how Council uses resources and delivers agreed outcomes to agreed standards. In addition, steps are being taken to introduce a project management culture across the organisation and there are technology upgrades underway to enable staff, reduce the need for multiple requirements for data entry and provide workflow-enabled processing. Replacements for non-performing, un-integrated technology systems have been identified and are being introduced with effective integration with core and other systems so that the full benefits can be derived.

These changes will continue over the next three years to modernise the organisation and ensure its sustainability.

“We have managed to address a \$6 million deficit by making significant internal changes and savings without impacting upon our residents, but if we want to grow our city...we will need to increase revenue into the future.”

- Mayor Isaac Smith

Have Your Say, Lismore

One of the key objectives in the Imagine Lismore Community Strategic Plan is for Council to engage and communicate with the community. Launched in late 2017, Council's online engagement portal, Your Say Lismore, has proved to be a popular method for inviting online community comment to inform Council decision-making and for increasing public awareness of Council projects and activities which affect the community.

In 2018-19, Council conducted 152 engagement projects and surveys through Your Say Lismore.

7,000 visitors to the site

2,470 documents downloaded

2,333 registered users

152 engagement projects and surveys

There were 7,000 visitors to the site, who viewed videos and photos, asked questions, lodged online submissions, viewed Frequently Asked Questions, participated in quick polls, and submitted ideas.

The most popular engagement projects during the year were the exhibition of the Draft Revised Imagine Lismore Delivery Program 2017-21 and Operational Plan 2019-20, which attracted 642 participants between May - June 2019, and the Your Roads Lismore engagement page, which received 322 visitors over the year.



DID YOU KNOW?

You can register for Your Say Lismore by visiting <https://yoursay.lismore.nsw.gov.au/>

Projects we progressed

- In December 2018, the Code of Meeting Practice was updated in line with new Office of Local Government requirements (see p. 9).
- Council's Equal Employment Opportunity Plan was updated in December 2018.
- In May 2019, Council rolled out new corporate performance software to better track progress and performance in delivering the projects and activities in the Imagine Lismore Delivery Program.
- In June 2019, Council adopted a revised Code of Conduct, which contains new provisions as prescribed by the NSW Government, and commenced Councillor and staff training to embed the new Code.
- A review of the employee performance management framework and supporting human resources policies and procedures was commenced.

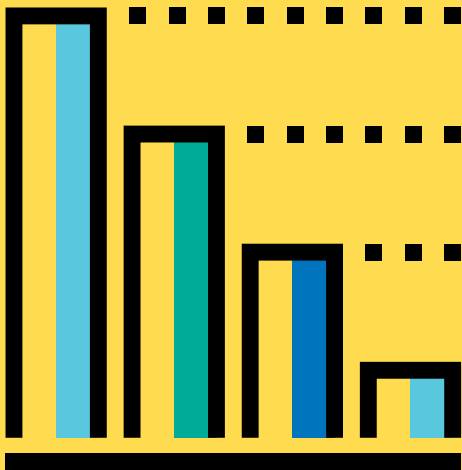
Public Access to Government Information (GIPA)

The GIPA Act 2009 aims to make government information more accessible to the public by providing an open and transparent process for public access to this information. Government agencies must make information available via open access or in response to access applications, unless there is an overriding interest against disclosure.

In 2018-19, Council received 27 applications for public access to government information. Of these, 10 were granted in full, 13 were granted in part, and the remainder were either refused or the information was not held.

A full list of statutory GIPA statistics can be found in Appendix 1 (Statutory Information).

Community Financial Report 2018-19



What information is included?

The Community Financial Report provides a plain English explanation of our financial statements so that they can be easily understood by our community, business partners, customers and employees. It's a snapshot of:

- our financial performance for 2018-19;
- our financial position at 30 June 2019;
- what the results mean in terms of financial sustainability.

What were the highlights?

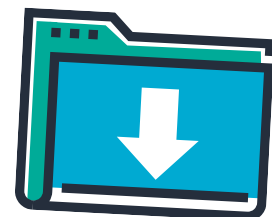
In one word 'change'. The 2018-19 financial year has been a year of change as we have implemented several cost saving measures to address the \$6.1m deficit that was uncovered in early 2019. A new zero-based budgeting process was implemented to identify where expenditure could be reduced. Examples of the savings identified include \$3.6 million at Council quarries by utilising existing stockpiles and \$470,000 in operational efficiencies at GSAC. Council's vehicle fleet was also reviewed and non-performing assets were sold. Although once-only cost write-offs were incurred, which were the main contributor to the lower result compared to 2017-18, cash was freed up to improve Council's cashflow position. System upgrades and process improvements have also

begun, to ensure Council operates efficiently and effectively across all its different functions.

Looking to the longer-term, Council faces an ongoing challenge to adequately fund the maintenance and renewal of its assets, particularly as our community grows and needs increase. This is not a unique issue to us, but one experienced by many other local governments in NSW. This is why Council has consulted the community regarding a Special Rate Variation, something many of our neighbouring and similar-sized councils have already implemented. By the time this report 'goes to press', the outcome of this process will be known.

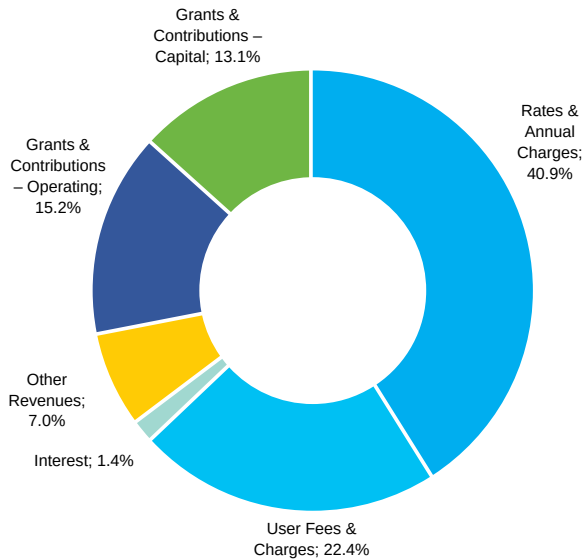
DID YOU KNOW?

More detailed information about our financial performance and position is provided in the audited Financial Statements and Auditor's Report (Appendix 2), which is available from our website at www.lismore.nsw.gov.au.

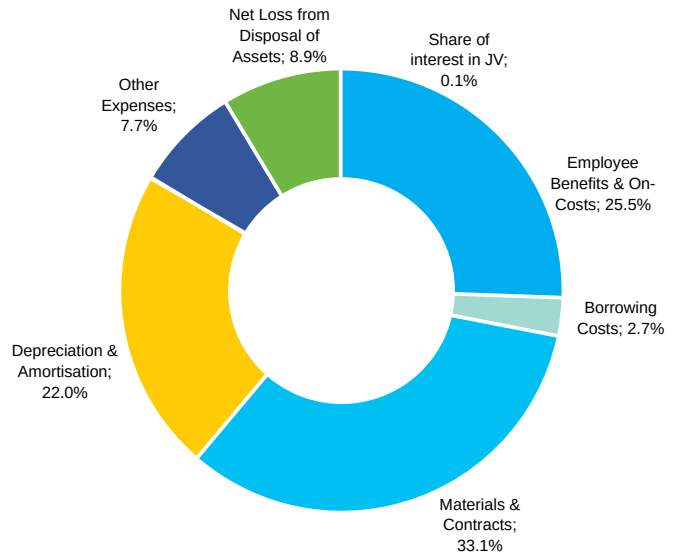


Financial Performance

Total Revenue: \$131.6 million
up \$5.6 million from last year



Total Expenses: \$122.8 million
up \$12.6 million from last year



What was the result?

Net Result: \$8.8 million surplus

(after capital grants and contributions)
Down \$6.9 million from last year

Net Result: \$8.5 million deficit

(before capital grants and contributions)
Down \$6.6 million from last year

Major changes from 2017-18:

- \$2.5m increase in waste recycling revenues due to the commencement of the container deposit scheme.
- \$3.2m decrease in user fees and charges due to reduced product sales at Blakebrook Quarry.
- \$4m increase in non-cash expenses (depreciation) due to writing off assets at the waste facility.
- \$3.7m increase in materials and contracts expenses, due mainly to expenditure related to insurance and roadwork repairs associated with the March 2017 flood.

DID YOU KNOW?

A capital grant or contribution includes money provided by the Government or contributions from developers for Council to renew or build new community assets. The money cannot be spent on Council's day-to-day operating activities or services.

Financial Position

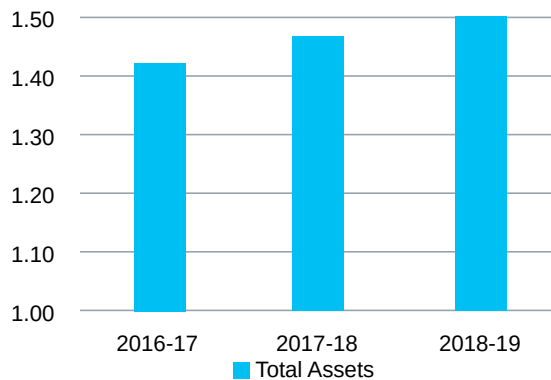
Total Assets: \$1.51 billion

up \$36.7 million from last year

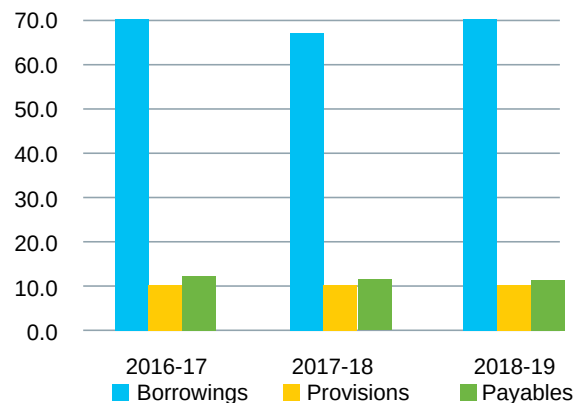
Total Liabilities: \$96.6 million

up \$9.3 million from last year

What do we own? (\$ billion)



What do we owe? (\$ million)



93.0% of Council's assets were infrastructure, property, plant and equipment, including:

- Roads, bridges and footpaths
- Water infrastructure
- Wastewater infrastructure
- Stormwater infrastructure
- Land and buildings
- Plant and equipment
- Open space and recreation assets (including parks)

Debt is not a dirty word

When appropriate, we borrow funds to invest in community infrastructure (we do not borrow to fund our day-to-day operating expenses). Our borrowings have remained constant over the past three years due mainly to the funding of major wastewater infrastructure upgrades (see Theme D). These are long-term assets that will benefit the community over many years. Debt funding enables us to spread the costs over the life of the assets as we pay back the loan over many years.

What was the result?

Net Worth: \$1.41 billion

up \$27.4 million from last year

Major changes from 2017-18:

- \$18.6m increase due to the revaluation of water, storm-water and sewerage assets.
- \$18.2m increase in cash and investments due to associated expenses being incurred in 2019-20.
- \$4m increase in payables which is related to the timing of expenses mentioned above.

Financial Sustainability

Each year, we report a series of performance measures, which are local government benchmarks set by the State Government and reflect expectations for financial sustainability. The measures use figures from the Audited Financial Statements (Appendix 2) to demonstrate relationships between key numbers.

There are two types of measures:

- Financial measures, which show how well Council is managing its finances.
- Infrastructure asset measures, which show how well Council is managing its assets.

Financial Measures

Operating Performance Ratio

This measures the extent to which revenue raised covers operational expenses.

Benchmark: > 0%

Council's result: **2.1%**



Debt Service Cover Ratio

This measures the availability of Council's operating cash to service its debt, including interest, principal and lease payments.

Benchmark: > 2 times

Council's result: **4.0 times**



Own Source Operating Revenue Ratio

This measures financial flexibility by assessing Council's reliance on external funding sources such as grants and contributions.

Benchmark: > 60%

Council's result: **71.0%**



Rates and Annual Charges Outstanding Percentage

This measures the impact of uncollected rates and annual charges on Council's liquidity, and the adequacy of Council's recovery efforts.

Benchmark: < 10%

Council's result: **9.7%**



Unrestricted Current Ratio

This measures whether Council has enough short-term resources to cover short-term financial obligations.

Benchmark: > 1.5 times

Council's result: **1.56 times**



Cash Expenses Cover Ratio

This measures the number of months Council can continue paying for its immediate expenses without additional cash inflows.

Benchmark: > 3 months

Council's result: **10.5 months**



Infrastructure Asset Measures

Asset Maintenance Ratio

This measures actual maintenance for the year as a percentage of the required maintenance for the year.

Benchmark: > 100%

Council's result: **93.2%**



Infrastructure Backlog Ratio

This measures Council's infrastructure backlog as a proportion of the total value of Council's infrastructure assets.

Benchmark: < 2%

Council's result: **10.7%**



Asset Renewal Ratio

This measures the rate at which existing assets are being renewed against the rate at which they are depreciating.

Benchmark: > 100%

Council's result: **216%**



What do the results mean?

Our financial sustainability measures for 2018-19 suggest that we had enough resources to cover immediate expenses, service our debts, and fund operating expenses during the year without relying too heavily on external funding (such as grants and contributions from the Government). These are all shorter-term ratios, and the results suggest that we effectively managed our finances during the financial year.

However, the infrastructure asset measures, which are focussed on longer-term sustainability, suggest that Council faces an ongoing challenge to

adequately fund the maintenance and renewal of its assets.

In 2018-19, Council's Asset Maintenance and Infrastructure Backlog ratios were in the red. This means Council was not able to find enough funding to cover the required asset maintenance and infrastructure backlog, both of which relate primarily to roads. Note the Asset Renewal ratio is only favourable due to the capitalisation of the South Lismore Sewage Treatment Plant (\$24m), which is a component of the long-term Strategic Business Plan for Water Supply & Wastewater Services.

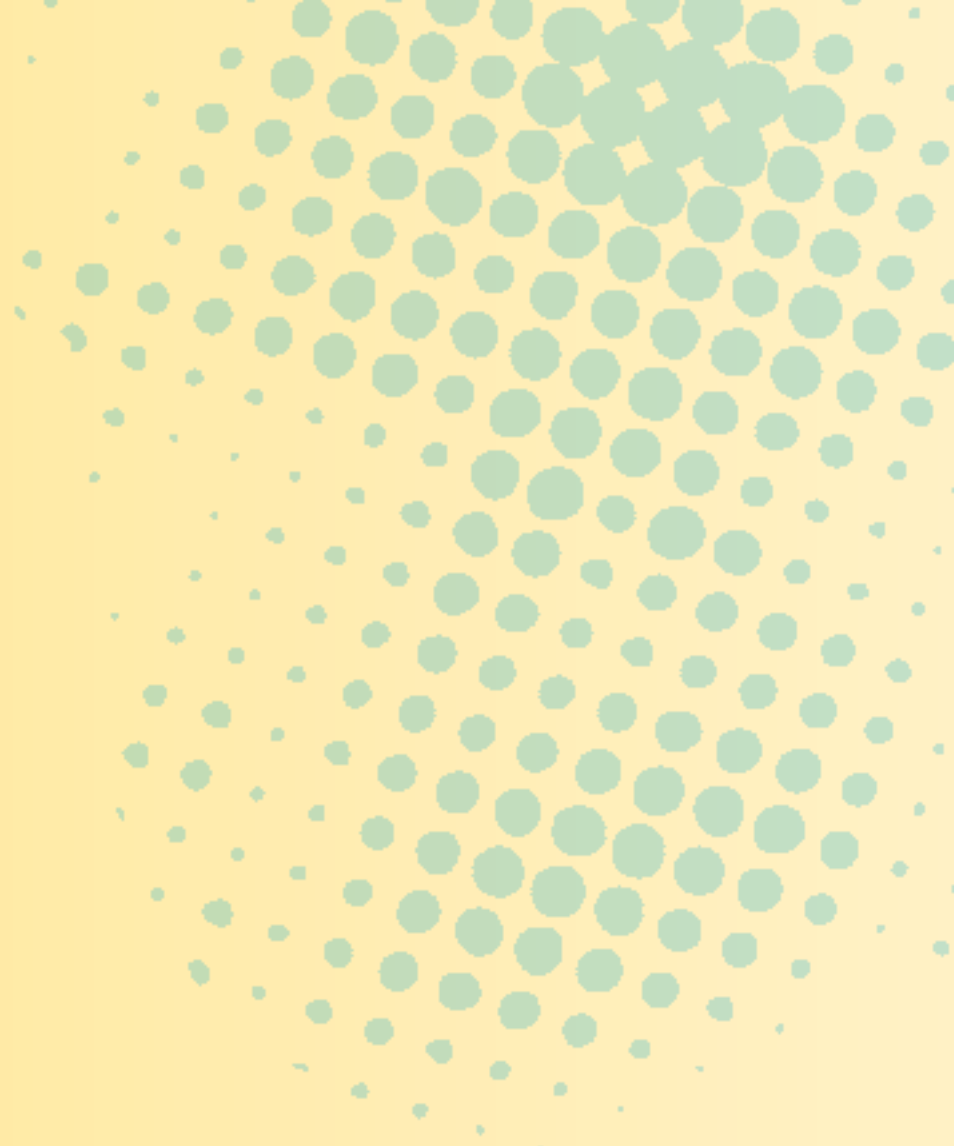
Statutory Index

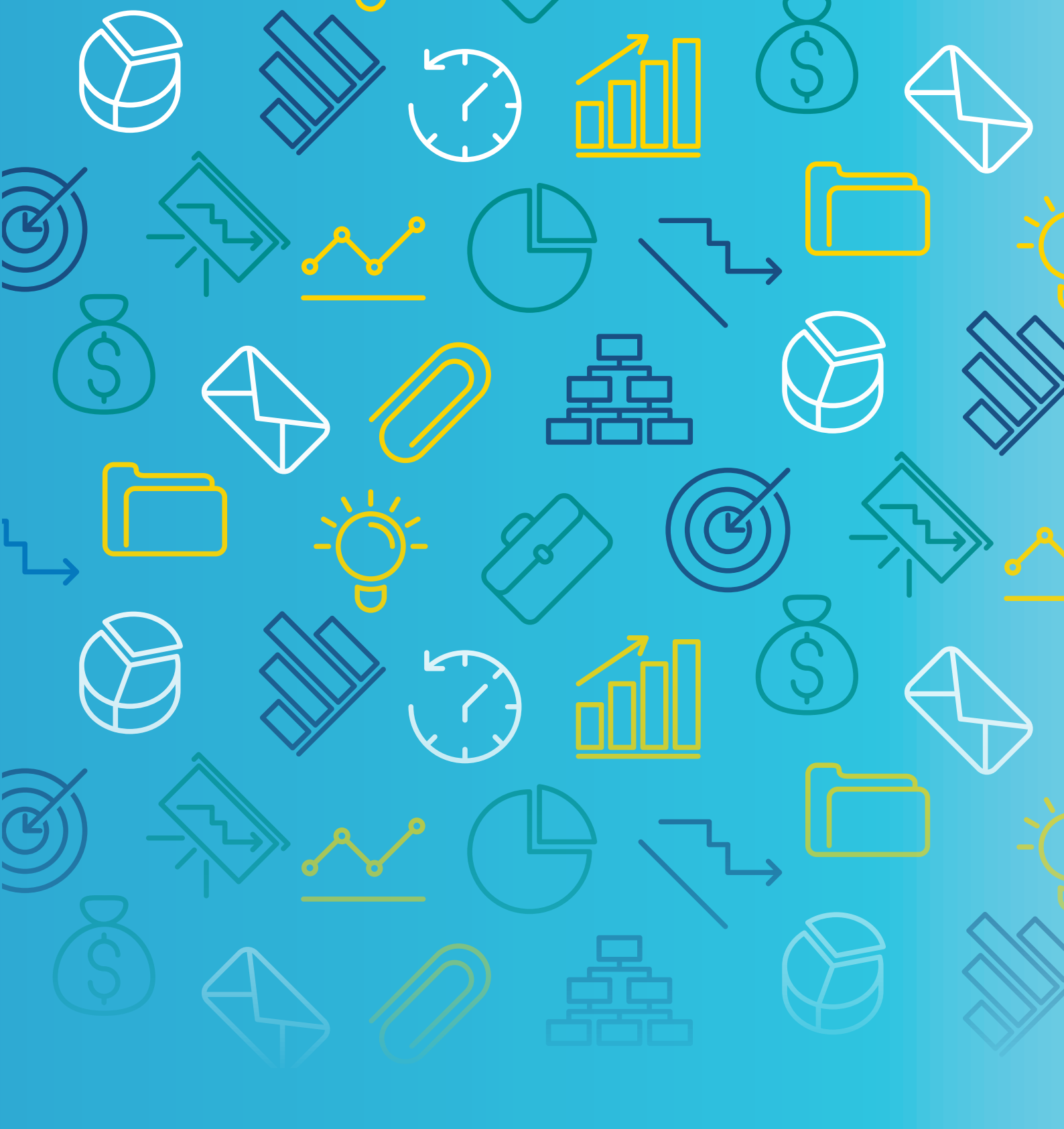
	Annual Report	Appendix 1: Statutory Information
Beneficiaries of Financial Assistance (grants and donations)	44	2
Capital Expenditure Reviews	N/A	2
Companion Animal Enforcement	17	2
Contracts Awarded	N/A	3
Councillor Expenses and Facilities	9	4
Disability Inclusion Action Plan	19	4
Government Information (Public Access) Applications	47	5
Environmental Upgrade Agreements	N/A	7
External Bodies (controlled by Council)	N/A	7
External Bodies (delegated by Council)	N/A	8
External Bodies (participated in by Council)	N/A	8
Equal Employment Opportunity	18	8
Legal Proceedings	N/A	9
Overseas Visits	9	9
Public Interest Disclosure	N/A	10
Rates and Charges Written Off	N/A	10
Recovery and Threat Abatement Plans	N/A	11
Remuneration (General Manager)	11	11
Remuneration (Senior Staff)	11	11
Special Rate Variation Expenditure (Business Promotion)	24	12
Special Rate Variation Expenditure (Biodiversity Management)	30	14
Stormwater Management Services	35	16
Swimming Pool Inspections	16	16
Voluntary Planning Agreements	41	17
Works on Private Land	N/A	17

DID YOU KNOW?

The Appendices can be downloaded from the website at www.lismore.nsw.gov.au.







**For more information phone
Lismore City Council**

1300 87 83 87

